deliberate bluff English colonel type.

NY: OR 7-1000
Coronet magazine
asked Olin Mathieson
Winchester Div.

May 15, 1966

Phone Conversation with Mrs. Charlene Fitzsimmons of East Long Branch
Avenue, Ocean Gate, New Jersey
Telephone: 201/ 341-0269
Beachwood: 201-349-1241

Mrs. Fitzsimmons recalled that she had had an extensive conversation with her husband, Robert, at the time he had received my letter of inquiry about Underhill. They were in Benidorm, Spain at the time and following the conversation, Fitzsimmons wrote me the attached letter (dated Sun. June 21). To refresh Mrs. Fitzsimmons memory I read her the parts dealing with her alleged conversation with the deceased. She concurred with everything read to her, save for the reference to narcotics made in paragraph 4 of the letter. She did say, "It may have been that he mentioned narcotics, but I am not sure, it has been so long. However, he did mention that certain [redacted] individuals were dealing in arms and gun-running and making money."

Mrs Fitzsimmons said of Underhill, "He seemed terribly scared, excited and unstrung and went on and on. He kept repeating that he hadn't been drinking. I thought that he was hysterical, paranoid or something. I mentioned that we were catching a freighter to Spain and he said he would probably have to do the same, to get out of the country. It became clear to me that he was really scared."

I told Mrs. Fitzsimmons that she would probably be directly quoted some time in the future and told her I would send her a copy of this memorandum. For your purposes, I believe, you are safe in using all of the information in Fitzsimmon's letter to me of June 21st, save for the reference to narcotics, although you might even use that with Mrs. Fitzsimmon's qualification.

Later, I spoke with Jones Harris and gave him your number in Washington. He said he would call you right away and tell you all he knew with regard to his talks with Brynes and the medical student. He could not recall the student's name either. Jones again pointed out something I had forgotten, i. e. that Brynes had walked into Underhill's room a day or so earlier and had seen the body in the identical position it was in at the time of his second visit when he determined that Underhill was dead. Brynes told Jones that Underhill was shot through the head from left to right and that the gun was under the body. It is Jone's opinion that a silencer was used as no one in the building heard a shot.

May 15,1966

Notes on J. Garrett Underhill, suicide victim of May 8,1964 where it is suspected by Ramparts magazine that he knew facts about the Kennedy assassination that have never been revealed.

Asher Brynes, editor at N.R., a heart victim, apparently was a friend who saw him dead with a medical student present. Asher Brynes address is 1505 30th st. nw. and number, HU 3-7796.

Brynes claims Underhill was a brilliant, though minor, tactician, a specialist in small arms, and had a profound analytical mind that was given to working out problems on paper, that his theories were often original and provocative, but that when it came to proving them he was at a loss. They were not the sort of presumptions that on their face would have stood up in court. "The stuff was always in flux," according to Brynes, who was a friend from the late 1950's.

Underhill, at the time of his death, was a research assistant to Charles J.V. Murphy, military affairs writer for Fortune. He is said to have been largely responsible for the reportage at Life and Luce's views on the Second World War and Korean War. He knew quite a few of the Russians in Washington and N.Y. and was a friend at one time of Cummings, head of Interarmco, the CIA arms broker in Alexandria, Va. No date was given for this relationship, but it broke off at some point. He also said that Underhill was a government intelligence agent during World War II, but knew of no employment by the CIA in the 1960s.

Cummings also supplied Kleins

Brynes also says the Washington police bungled the investigation of Underhill's death and "that if you could not believe they were so stupid you might think there was some other reason for it." He accepts the suicide, but says that others have tried to investigate the death, among them John Wellington Donovan. Brynes was the one who found Underhill's body, and says there were probably good reasons for suicide, since he had some personal difficulties, including the fact that he and his wife had parted a year earlier.

As to theories about Kennedy, Brynes does not remember any of Underhill's accounts precisely, but says that his reasoning was based on deductive logic from the press accounts, and that as far as he knows, he had no closer connection to the crime than the newspapers like everyone else. Further, says Brynes, Underhill left nothing in writing on the subject as far as he can tell, so the only conclusions that can be drawn, in the absence of writing, would have to come from someone who heard the story of the assassination from him and has it clearly in mind. This leaves the question whether there are papers on the subject in his estate, over which his wife has control. But she is not talking.

SSC